

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

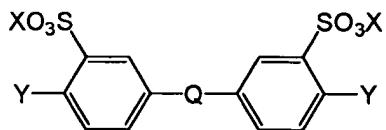
Please amend the claims as shown in the listing below.

1. (Withdrawn) A composite ion exchange membrane comprising an ion exchange resin composition, and a support membrane having a continuous pore penetrating the support membrane, wherein

said support membrane is a support membrane which accepts said ion exchange resin composition within said pore, and

said ion exchange resin composition is an ion exchange resin composition which contains an ion exchange resin containing, as a main component, an aromatic polyether and/or its derivative, the aromatic polyether being obtained by mixing a monomer component which contains, as main ingredients, a compound represented by Chemical Formula 1, an aromatic dihalogenated compound and a bisphenol compound with a carbonate and/or a bicarbonate of an alkali metal and polymerizing the mixture in an organic solvent:

(in Chemical Formula 1, Q represents a $-S(=O)_2-$ group or a $-C(=O)-$ group; X represents an H atom, an Li atom, an Na atom or a K atom; and Y represents an F atom, a Cl atom, a Br atom or an I atom).

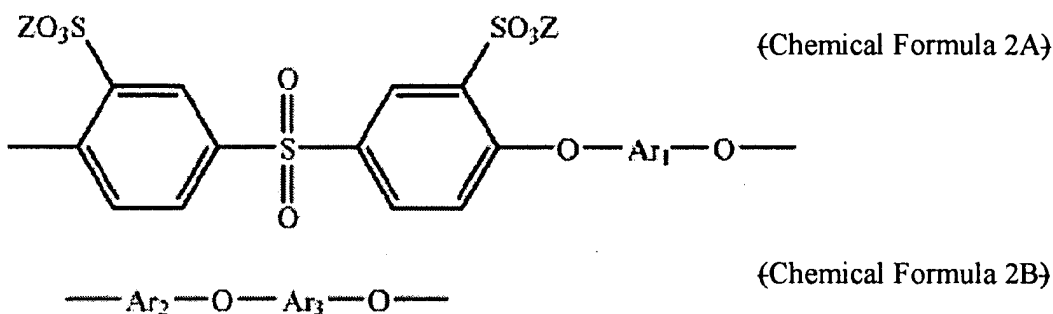


(Chemical Formula 1)

2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A composite ion exchange membrane comprising an ion exchange resin composition, and a support membrane having continuous pores penetrating the

support membrane, wherein said support membrane is a support membrane which accepts said ion exchange resin composition within said pore, and said ion exchange resin composition is an ion exchange resin composition which contains an ion exchange resin including linking units represented by Chemical Formula 2A and linking units represented by Chemical Formula 2B at a ratio, Chemical Formula 2A : Chemical Formula 2B = n : m,



(wherein in Chemical Formulas 2A and 2B, Z represents H, Li, Na, K or a cation derived from an aliphatic or aromatic amine; ~~Ar₁ and Ar₃ independently represent one or more kinds of bivalent organic groups; Ar₂ represents one or more kinds of bivalent organic groups including an aromatic ring having an electron withdrawing group; and n represents an integer within a range of 1 to 1000; and m represents an integer within a range of [[0]] 1 to 1000),~~

wherein the composite ion exchange membrane has a surface layer comprising said ion exchange resin composition on each side of said support membrane,

wherein the thickness of each of side surface layers is within a range of 1 to 50 μ m and also is within a range which does not exceed half the total thickness of said composite ion exchange membrane,

wherein at least one surface of said support membrane has an aperture ratio within a range of 40 to 95%,

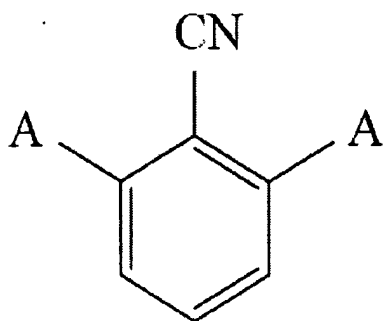
wherein the inherent viscosity of the ion exchange resin is not lower than 0.4 dl/g and not higher than 1.5 dl/g,

wherein the porosity of the support membrane is not lower than 95%, and

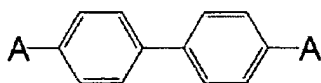
wherein said Ar₁ in Chemical Formula 2A and said Ar₃ in Chemical Formula 2B each [[are]] is a linking unit represented by said Chemical Formula 6, said Ar₂ in Chemical Formula

2B is a linking unit represented by said Chemical Formula 4, and said n and said m each ~~is an integer within a range of 1 to 1000 which satisfies~~ satisfy Mathematical Expression 2:

$$0.2 \leq n/(n + m) \leq 0.8 \text{ (Mathematical Expression 2)}$$



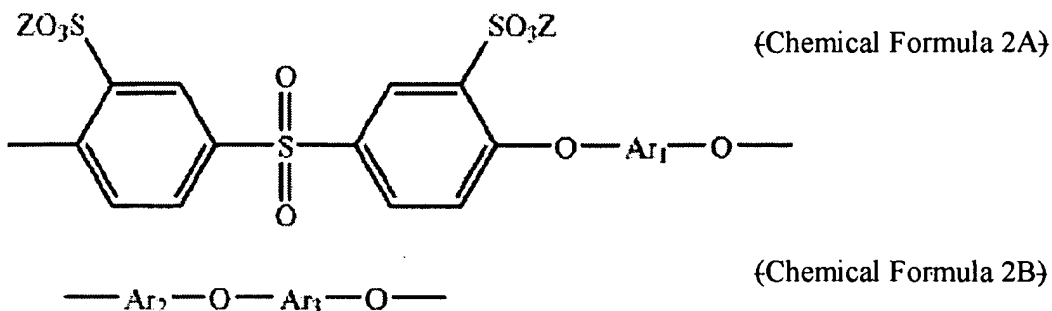
(Chemical Formula 4)



(Chemical Formula 6)

{ wherein in Chemical Formula 4 and Chemical Formula 6, A represents in each occurrence a linking site with another linking unit}.

7. (Currently Amended) A composite ion exchange membrane comprising an ion exchange resin composition, and a support membrane having continuous pores penetrating the support membrane, wherein said support membrane is a support membrane which accepts said ion exchange resin composition within said pore, and said ion exchange resin composition is an ion exchange resin composition which contains an ion exchange resin including linking units represents by Chemical Formula 2A and linking units represented by Chemical Formula 2B at a ratio, Chemical Formula 2A : Chemical Formula 2B = n : m,



(wherein in Chemical Formulas 2A and 2B, Z represents H, Li, Na, K or a cation derived from an aliphatic or aromatic amine; ~~Ar₁ and Ar₃ independently represent one or more kinds of bivalent organic groups; Ar₂ represents one or more kinds of bivalent organic groups including an aromatic ring having an electron-withdrawing group; and n represents an integer within a range of 1 to 1000 and m represents an integer within a range of [[0]] 1 to 1000),~~

wherein the composite ion exchange membrane has a surface layer comprising said ion exchange resin composition on each side of said support membrane,

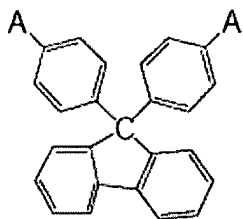
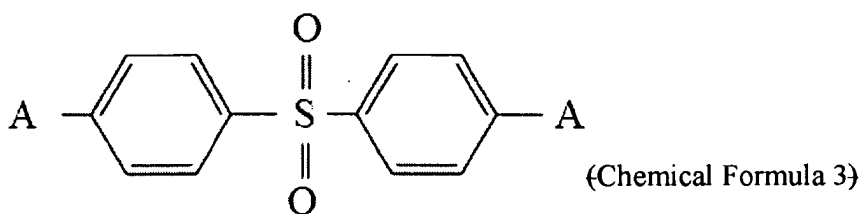
wherein the thickness of each of side surface layers is a within a range of 1 to 50 μ m and also is within a range which does not exceed half the total thickness of said composite ion exchange membrane,

wherein at least one surface of said support membrane has a aperture ratio within a range of 40 to 95%,

wherein the inherent viscosity of the ion exchange resin is not lower than 0.4 dl/g and not higher than 1.5 dl/g,

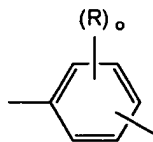
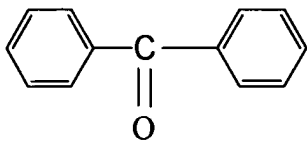
wherein the porosity of the support membrane is not lower than 95%, and

wherein said Ar₁ in Chemical Formula 2A and said Ar₃ in Chemical Formula 2B each [[are]] is a linking unit represented by said Chemical Formula 7, said Ar₂ in Chemical Formula 2B is a linking unit represented by said Chemical Formula 3, and said n and said m each are is an integer within a range of 1 to 1000 which satisfies satisfy Mathematical Expression 3:
 $0.3 \leq n/(n + m) \leq 0.7$ (Mathematical Expression 3).



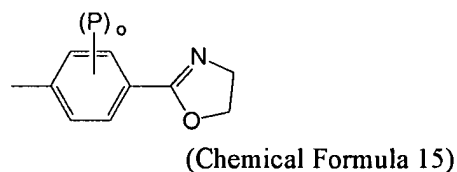
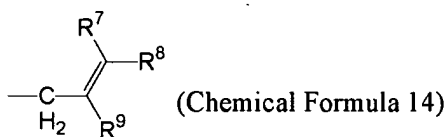
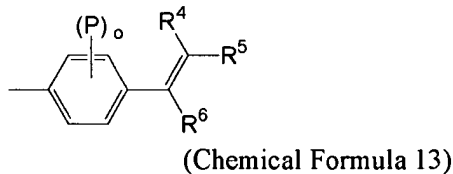
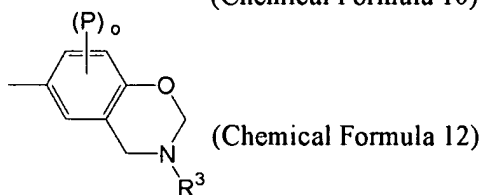
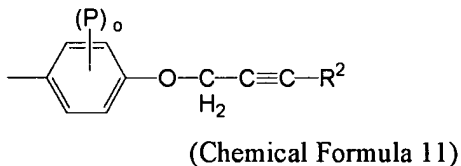
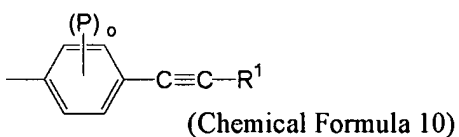
8. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 1, wherein said ion exchange resin composition contains a crosslinked ion exchange resin obtained by crosslinking an ion exchange resin having an ionizable group in the molecule and also having a photocrosslinkable group and/or a thermally crosslinkable group in the molecule.

9. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 8, wherein said photocrosslinkable group contains both a crosslinkable group having a chemical structure represented by Chemical Formula 8 and a crosslinkable group having a chemical structure represented by Chemical Formula 9:



(in Chemical Formula 8 and Chemical Formula 9, R represents an aliphatic hydrocarbon group with a carbon number within a range of 1 to 10; and o represents an integer within a range of 1 to 4).

10. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 8, wherein said thermally crosslinkable group is one or more kind selected from the group consisting of the thermally crosslinkable groups of chemical structures represented by Chemical Formulas 10 to 15:



(in Chemical Formulas 10 to 15, R¹ to R⁹ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group with a carbon number within a range of 1 to 10, a phenyl group, an aromatic group with a carbon number within a range of 6 to 20 or a halogen atom; P represents a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group with a carbon number within a range of 1 to 10, halogen, a nitro group or a -SO₃T group; T represents an H atom or a monovalent metal ion; and o represents an integer within a range of 1 to 4).

11. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 1, which has a surface layer comprising said ion exchange resin composition on each side of said support membrane.

12. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 11, wherein the thickness of each of said surface layers is within a range of 1 to 50 μm and also is within a range which does not exceed half the total thickness of said composite ion exchange membrane.

13. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 11, wherein at least one surface of said support membrane has an aperture ratio within a range of 40 to 95%.

14. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 11, wherein said support membrane contains a polybenzazole-type polymer as a material.

15. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 12, wherein said support membrane contains a polybenzazole-type polymer as a material.

16. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 13, wherein said support membrane contains a polybenzazole-type polymer as a material.

17. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 14, wherein said support membrane is obtained by shaping an isotropic solution containing said polybenzazole-type polymer in a content within a range of 0.5 to 2% by mass into film and then solidifying the solution.

18. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 1, wherein when a straight line running through the composite ion exchange membrane along its thickness direction is set in an analysis area in a cross section of said composite ion exchange membrane

and a linear analysis for elements contained only in the ion exchange resin is conducted using an electron probe microanalyzer, the variation in the number of X-ray counted, as indicated in CV value, is within 50%.

19. (Withdrawn) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 1, wherein when a straight line running through the composite ion exchange membrane along its thickness direction is set in an analysis area in a cross section of said composite ion exchange membrane and a linear analysis for elements contained only in the ion exchange resin is conducted using an electron probe microanalyzer, the number of the analysis points where the number of the counted X-rays of the analyzed elements is 5% or less relative to the maximum number is within a range of 0 to 30% of the number of all the analysis points.

20-22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 6, wherein said support membrane contains a polybenzazole-type polymer as a material.

24. (Previously Presented) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 7, wherein said support membrane contains a polybenzazole-type polymer as a material.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously presented) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 23, wherein said support membrane is obtained by shaping an isotropic solution containing said polybenzazole-type polymer in a content within a range of 0.5 to 2% by mass into film and then solidifying the solution.

27. (Previously Presented) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 6, wherein when a straight line running through the composite ion exchange membrane along its thickness direction is set in an analysis area in a cross section of said composite ion exchange membrane and a linear analysis for elements contained only in the ion exchange resin is

conducted using an electron probe microanalyzer, the variation in the number of X-ray counted, as indicated in CV value, is within 50%.

28. (Previously Presented) The composite ion exchange membrane according to claim 6, wherein when a straight line running through the composite ion exchange membrane along its thickness direction is set in an analysis area in a cross section of said composite ion exchange membrane and a linear analysis for elements contained only in the ion exchange resin is conducted using an electron probe microanalyzer, the number of the analysis points where the number of the counted X-rays of the analyzed elements is 5% or less relative to the maximum number is within a range of 0 to 30% of the number of all the analysis points.